

# RESEMBID funded RESILIENT CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROJECT launched for Sint Maarten

**30th May 2022, Sint Maarten. Building on its experience in dealing with natural and man-made hazards, Sint Maarten is adopting a more comprehensive and sustainable approach to crisis management. The Sint Maarten Government, in partnership with VNG International, announced last week the launch of a €1 million project to provide the island with a more adaptative mode of crisis response.**



Angelique Gumbs, (left), Director, Department of Interior and Kingdom Relations (BAK) shares lens time with Sint Maarten Prime Minister, Silveria Jacobs (centre) and Fabian McKinnon, Programme Director of RESEMBID. The occasion was the launch of a 1 million EURO project funded by RESEMBID and implemented by VNG International and the government of Sint Maarten.



Sint Maarten Prime Minister, Silveria Jacobs (centre) chats briefly with Fabian McKinnon (right), Programme Director of RESEMBID (right) at the launch of a 1 million EURO resilience project for Sint Maarten. At left is Edward Turvill, Programme Manager, Resilience at RESEMBID

Ahead of the start of the foremost biennial gathering on reducing disaster risk and building resilience of communities and nations at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Bali (23-28 May), the Government of Sint Maarten officially launched a momentous initiative to foster 'Resilient Crisis Management'.

This 18-month project, funded by the European Union through the regional RESEMBID Programme, is implemented in partnership with the international cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNGI). This multi-faceted initiative is of strategic significance for the implementation of the islands' vision to build comprehensive disaster risk management, as well as for the other 12 overseas countries and territories (OCTs) of the Caribbean, which include Aruba, Anguilla, Bonaire, British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Montserrat, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Saint Barthélemy, Sint Maarten, and Turks and Caicos.

The new programme builds on prior disaster preparedness technical assistance and goes further by:

- a) establishing standard operating procedures to make crisis response more effective, efficient and timely;
- b) creating a network of certified trainers;
- c) developing the first crisis knowledge centre by collecting and institutionalising available knowledge and expertise, which will be made available to the island and other OCTs through a library, online courses and in-person training; and,
- d) enabling efficacious regional coordination mechanisms for disaster management, particularly among the Dutch OCTs.

At the launch of the initiative during the Steering Committee of Disaster Risk Management held on May 16, 2022, the Honourable Prime Minister Silveria Jacobs expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the European Union and RESEMBID for the financial and technical assistance provided, emphasising the importance of the contribution to her [government's] vision for Sint Maarten's comprehensive disaster risk management.

The knowledge centre is one of its kind in the Caribbean region and is set to become a centre of excellence offering wide scale training to internal and external stakeholders of Sint Maarten

At the same time, the Director of the RESEMBID Programme, Mr. Fabian McKinnon, took the opportunity to commend Prime Minister Jacobs for her vision on building resilience to shocks, and her leadership and commitment to a multi-pronged approach to modernise disaster risk management and promote sustainable development.

"I am very pleased to be at the launch of this crisis management project. It deals with disaster preparedness and gives a broader strategic approach to strengthening the resilience of Sint Maarten to disasters and climate change," said Mr. McKinnon, while delivering his remarks to those in attendance. "It reflects the sense of urgency prevalent among small islands in combatting climate change. RESEMBID and I salute Prime Minister Jacobs for your vision, resilience, leadership, and commitment to modernizing Disaster Risk Management and streamlining the Sustainable Development Goals across the work of the government," he said.

In turn, RESEMBID Programme Manager for Resilience, Mr. Edward Turvill, indicated that pre-existing governance arrangements, limited financial resources and low human resource capacity are among the major barriers and constraints faced by small islands when it comes to disaster risk management. He said that this project would be transformative for the island.

**"It is truly transformative and of great significance in the current context of increasing exposure and vulnerability of communities and critical infrastructure," said Mr. Turvill. "The RESEMBID Programme appreciates the strong support granted by the Steering Committee of Disaster Risk Management and is particularly proud of the added value of this EU regional assistance and the opportunity to build bridges between the countries and territories."**

It is expected that the project will be implemented within the broader strategy of the island and contribute to other efforts such as the development of disaster management policy and significantly improve the capacity to deal with the diverse and recurring crises the island faces.

"We would like to thank RESEMBID and Expertise France for all the support that we get. This project will position Sint Maarten as one of the first countries in the region to have systems in place like this," said Department of Interior and Kingdom Relations' (BAK) Angelique Gumbs.